IN THE CLAIMS

Current Listing Of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method comprising:

determining a dry etch rate of a sacrificial, light absorbing material (SLAM) and of an interlayer dielectric (ILD) material;

comparing the dry etch rate of the ILD material with the dry etch rate of the SLAM;

altering the composition of the SLAM by altering the carbon to silicon ratio of the SLAM to provide a changed dry etch rate for the SLAM such that the dry etch rate of the altered SLAM is approximately equal to the dry etch rate of the ILD material.

2. (Original) The method defined by claim 1, wherein altering the composition of the SLAM increases its dry etch rate.

3. (Original) The method defined by claim 1, wherein altering the composition of the SLAM decreases its dry etch rate.

4. (Original) The method defined by claim 1, wherein the SLAM comprises a polymer-based material.

5. (Cancelled)

6. (Cancelled)

7. (Cancelled)

8. (Cancelled)

9. (Cancelled)

10. (Cancelled)

11. (Cancelled)

12. (Cancelled)

13. (Currently Amended) A method comprising:

selecting a sacrificial, light absorbing material (SLAM) for use with a dielectric material in a damascene process;

comparing a dry etch rate of the SLAM with a dry etch rate of the dielectric material when both are etched at the same time;

determining whether the etch rate of the SLAM needs to be increased or decreased to match the etch rate of the dielectric material;

altering the composition of the SLAM by introducing carbon in a cyclic or a cage form to increase or decrease its etch rate such that the etch rate of the altered SLAM matches the etch rate of the dielectric material.

14. (Original) The method defined by claim 13, wherein the dielectric material is a carbon doped oxide.

15. (Original) The method defined by claim 14, wherein the SLAM is a polymer-based material.

16. (Cancelled)

17. (Cancelled)

18. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~17~~ 13, wherein the ~~halogen is fluorine~~ cage form is adamantyl.

19. (Cancelled)

20. (Original) The method defined by claim19, wherein the SLAM is a siloxane based material.

21. (Cancelled)

22. (Cancelled)

23. (Currently Amended) A method comprising:

altering the composition of a SLAM by adding a fluorine-containing additive to provide a changed dry etch rate for the SLAM such that the changed etch rate of the altered SLAM is approximately equal to a dry etch rate of an interlayer dielectric (ILD) material;

forming a via opening in a layer fabricated from the ILD material;

filling the via opening with the altered SLAM; and

etching a trench approximately centered on the via opening such that the ILD material and the SLAM etch at the same rate.

24. (Original) The method defined by claim 23, wherein the ILD material is a carbon doped oxide.

25. (Original) The method defined by claim 23, wherein the ILD material is a polymer based material.

26. (new) The method defined by claim 23, wherein adding a fluorine-containing additive comprises adding a low molecular weight polyvinylidene.

27. (new) The method defined by claim 23, wherein adding a fluorine-containing additive comprises adding a perfluoropolyether.